

WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE?

THE BOUNDARIES OF COLLECTIVE ACTION & THE MITZVAH OF REBUKE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

BIG QUESTION: HOW DO WE DEAL WITH CHALLENGES TO OUR CORE VALUES?

This discussion will focus on two related questions:

- (1) When is it appropriate to collaborate with those with whom we may differ on certain core moral issues?
- (2) How should we “rebuke” someone whose behavior we find offensive?

NAME TAGS:

Please ask everyone in the group to wear a name tag (or, if seated around a table, to place a name card in front of them). Even if most people know one another, it is important that no one feel uncomfortable for not remembering everyone else’s name.

CHOOSING YOUR TEXTS:

The text study contains a number of different texts. It is unlikely you will get to all of them. That is perfectly fine! Before you meet, you will want to read through the texts, to get a sense of which ones you would like to prioritize. Then see where the discussion leads you!

DIRECTING MEMBERS TO THE READING:

At least a few days before you meet, please direct your group members to the article by Yehuda Kurtzer entitled “Linda Sarsour and American Jewish Politics,” which can be found here: <http://jewishjournal.com/opinion/214276/linda-sarsour-american-jewish-politics/> . It is also accessible through a link on the CORE Groups page on our website.

Please ask everyone to read the article before the session, as it will form the basis for a significant portion of the discussion.

INTRODUCTION AND ICE-BREAKER:

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

- (a) their name; AND
- (b) on a scale of 1 to 10, how amenable they are to compromise.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Materials: Copies of the attached “Where are Your Red Lines” chart; pens.

This activity will allow participants to reflect on when and where they draw “red lines” when it comes to their closely held beliefs.

- (1) Pass out pens and handouts to each participant. Ask them to read through the list of issues, and to place a check in the appropriate column(s).
- (2) Bring the group back together to discuss their answers. How much agreement or disagreement was there among the group? Are some members more likely to draw red lines than others? Which issues seemed to trigger the strongest response?

TEXT STUDY

Attached is a text-study sheet. Please make sure to either make a copy for each member or ask everyone to bring it themselves, in paper or electronic form. If you choose the latter course, you may still wish to print a few extra copies for those who may forget to bring theirs.

Here are some things to consider:

- (a) It is customary to recite a blessing before studying Torah.

BARUCH atah, Adonai
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God,
Sovereign of the universe,
who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

- (b) Our tradition teaches us that Torah study can be a source of healing and blessing. You may want to ask members of the group if they would like to dedicate their study to anyone in particular. This is a nice way to help the group get to know one another, and to learn about significant events in each other's lives.
- (c) Depending on the preferences of your group, you may choose to distribute this sheet the week before the meeting, so that participants will be familiar with the texts, and can begin to think about their own responses.

- (d) You can choose to either work through the texts as one group, or to break up into pairs (“hevruta”) for an initial period of discussion, and then allow the pairs to share something they learned with the group.

- (e) The ultimate goal of these groups is not for participants to master a particular number of Jewish texts, but to connect with one another. If group members are sharing their own stories and experiences in a way that seems fruitful, there is no need to cut off that conversation in order to make sure you “finish” the text sheet. If you are unsure, you can always poll the group to decide whether it is time to move on.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Allow a few minutes for participants to reflect on your time together as a group. Did they learn anything about themselves? What surprised them? Is there any concrete change they might make in response to the materials you have studied together?

WHERE ARE YOUR RED LINES?

Many people draw “red lines” with respect to certain issues, and will refuse to engage or support those with whom they disagree. Do you have any “red lines”? Consider each of the following issues, and place a check the appropriate column(s).

ISSUE	Would you ATTEND AN EVENT at which someone was BEING HONORED who disagreed with you on this issue?	Could you be CLOSE FRIENDS with someone who disagreed with you on this issue?	Would you PARTICIPATE IN A DEMONSTRATION or similar action organized by a group that disagreed with you on this issue?	Could you support a POLITICAL CANDIDATE who disagreed with you on this issue?
Climate change				
Abortion access				
Gun control				
Recognizing Israel as the Homeland of the Jewish People				
Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) as a tool to advocate for Israel				
Transgender “bathroom laws”				
Refugee/immigration issues				